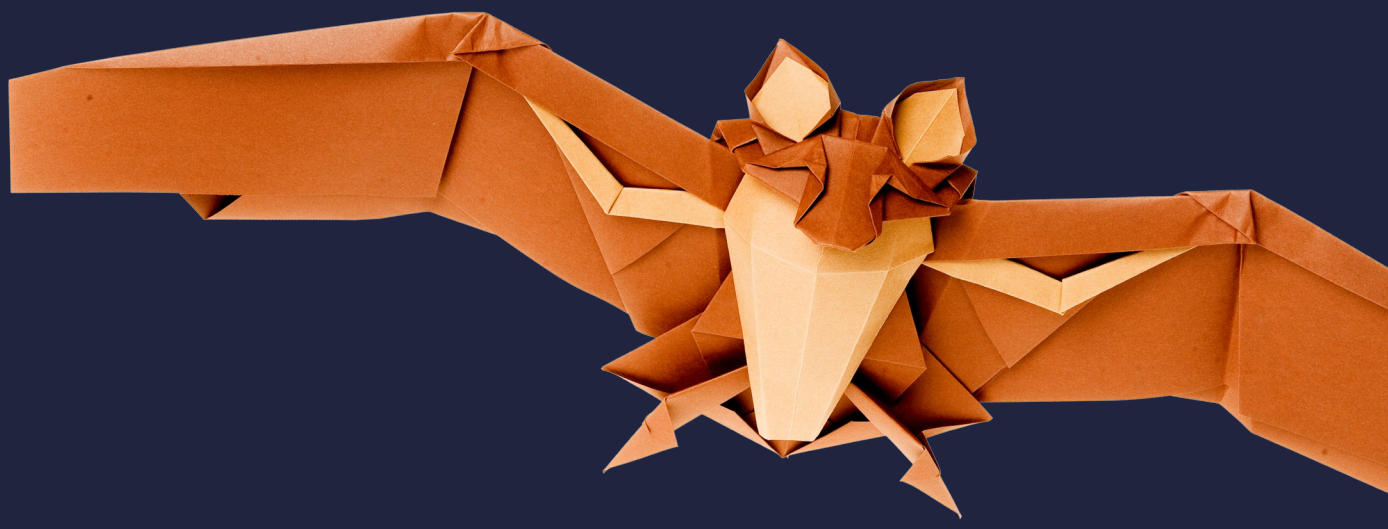
Pearson Edexcel

AS Level Music Technology

8MT0/03 2026

Teacher Support for Question 5



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Update on Component 3 Exam Paper and New Support Materials

As part of our ongoing commitment to making our assessments as fair and accessible as possible for all candidates, we've recently completed a review of our Component 3 exam papers.

Over the past few exam series, we made some changes to the structure of certain questions particularly Questions 5 in our AS Level Paper with the aim of improving accessibility and ensuring an appropriate level of challenge.

After feedback from centres, we've decided to return to the original format and structure of these questions, as used in the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs). This change will take effect starting with the June 2026 question paper and all subsequent exam series.

To help you and your students prepare, we've created a support pack with updated guidance and examiner commentaries, giving a clear picture of what to expect in future exam papers.

We're have also updated the Question Papers from previous exam series so that you'll have a complete and consistent set of papers to use as mock exams.

As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our Subject Advisor or submit a query through our support portal.

This pack has been designed to support students in completing Question 5 of the exam paper.

Question 5

From 2026 papers the question format will be the same as the Sample Assessment Materials published in 2017. The question will appear as one sentence similar to:

Compare the production techniques used in each version of the song.

Pearson have re-issued new versions of the 2023-2025 exam papers so that teachers can see what question 5 will look like and candidates can get used to this format in their mock exams.

The command word is ‘compare’. The specification states on page 53: “Compare: Make points about the similarities and differences. Make relative judgements.”

Both AO3 and AO4 are assessed in this question:

AO	Definition of AO	Marks
AO3	Demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of music technology.	8
AO4	Use analytical and appraising skills to make evaluative and critical judgements about the use of music technology.	8
Total		16

It is expected that candidates cover the scope of the following bullet points in order access all the marks:

- Capture, production approach and music style
- Sequencing, synthesis and sampling
- EQ and filtering
- Dynamic processing
- Pan and stereo field
- Effects.

However, it is possible that some of these may not occur in some recordings. For example, sampling won’t be present in a 1950s recording. Candidates may use the above bullets as subheadings help them structure their answers.

Quite commonly, candidates often do not refer to the songs specifically but instead offer a pre-prepared account on (principally) capture and technology associated with each era of recording, resulting in a low- to mid-band mark. To receive more credit, candidates must provide detailed analysis of the specific recordings, not merely resort to prepared memory recall of the eras.

When giving descriptions, candidates should be precise about where and what instrument production features occur in the song, e.g. “The electric guitar at

2:03…” or “The piano in the first chorus…”. If a candidate just says, “there is reverb”, the examiner would not be able to fully credit this if it’s not shown that the candidate has analysed on which instrument and where in the song it’s audible because effects would be different on each instrument and at different points in the song. To obtain higher marks, candidates must go into detail about parameter settings and how the music is impacted.

When candidates are answering this question, they may either:

- discuss the two recordings separately and any comparisons would be implied, or
- construct their answer as a series of direct comparisons, or
- use a mixture of the two above approaches.

The approach the candidate would take would be dependent on the recordings and their preference. Examiners credit the analysis of the production features of each recording.

The levels-based mark scheme published in the Sample Assessment Materials is used to mark candidate responses. This mark scheme will remain the same for the lifetime of the specification. Below, there is an additional fourth column below which shows the typical characteristics of work in each level which helps define the key words 'limited', 'some', 'clear' and 'detailed' further:

Level	Mark	Descriptor	What might this look like?
	0	No rewardable material.	• Blank • No relevant information
Level 1	1-4	• Demonstrates and applies limited knowledge and understanding of production techniques used, some of which may be inaccurate or irrelevant (AO3). • Gives limited analysis and deconstruction of production techniques used, making limited comparisons between the two recordings and/or little attempt at chains of reasoning (AO4).	• A limited response with little credit-worthy content • A few AO3 points with little or no AO4 explanation • Many inaccuracies may be present
Level 2	5-8	• Demonstrates and applies some knowledge and understanding of production techniques used, which is occasionally relevant but may include some inaccuracies (AO3). • Gives some analysis and deconstruction of production techniques used, making some comparisons between the two recordings and/or simplistic chains of reasoning (AO4).	• Principally AO3 points, rather than explaining parameters and/or effect for each feature. • General points about technology that could be applied to **any song**. • Some inaccuracies.
Level 3	9-12	• Demonstrates and applies clear knowledge and understanding of production techniques used, which is mostly relevant and accurate (AO3). • Gives clear analysis and deconstruction of production techniques used, making clear comparisons between the two recordings and competent chains of reasoning (AO4).	• Clear detail and/or strong AO3 accompanied with some AO4 depth of explanation. • Clear comparisons between tracks. • Points about technology are **applied to the songs.** Includes parameters, but in a general way.
Level 4	13-16	• Demonstrates and applies detailed knowledge and understanding of production techniques used, which is relevant and accurate throughout (AO3). • Gives detailed and accurate analysis and deconstruction of production techniques used, making detailed comparisons	• Responses are detailed. Discusses parameters **applied to specific instruments/time references within the songs.** • Strong AO3 and AO4. • Covers a range of points. Not limited to one or two aspects.

		between the two recordings and logical chains of reasoning (AO4).	

The indicative content in the mark scheme is used by examiners to check for the accuracy of what the candidate writes. It will include the most likely information given by candidates and indicates the level of detail expected. The indicative content is not prescriptive, and candidates are not required to include all of it. Other relevant material not in the indicative content must also be credited so examiners will listen to the songs to check candidate accuracy. The indicative content changes every year depending on the songs.

Question 5 exemplars

The following two Question 5 exemplars use actual candidate responses to 2025 Question 5 but show how the formatting would look and be assessed in 2026. The examiner marks are shown in red.

The short exemplar on the next page is an example of bottom of Level 2. Had the candidate considered the bullet points about scope (given on page 4 of this document), then that may have guided the candidate towards a wider scope.

In this response, there is “some knowledge and understanding of production techniques used”. The highlight of this response is noting the distortion on the guitar because that is an effect linked to an instrument in the specific recording, but there is no detail on the distortion settings. Because of the limited scope, it’s closer to “limited” than “clear” so it’s the bottom of Level 2.

5 Eurythmics: *Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)* (1983)

Marilyn Manson: *Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)* (1995)

Compare the production techniques used in each version of the song.

(16)

5

Eurythmics' track was captured through DIs or created digitally, as to create a unique and recognisable sound. Marilyn Manson's track was most likely captured through close micing the instruments and amps to get a clean sound. Eurythmics' track features a lot of synthesisers and sequenced drums due to the time period it was created. Marilyn Manson's track features ~~electric~~ electric guitars and bass due to the genre of the music, rock. Both songs feature a narrow dynamic range to make the songs more accessible. Marilyn Manson's track features a lot of distortion on the guitars and bass to create separation between the verses and choruses. In Eurythmics' track the backing vocal features reverb to fill out empty space.

10

The candidate on the next three pages is a Level 4 response. They have been diligent to cover a wide scope that encompasses the production aspects of all bullet points (on page 4), although dynamics was only briefly touched on with the vocal capture.

This response starts well. The first paragraph launches straight into detailed Level 4 material with oscillator types and distortion linked to instruments in the specific songs, and a direct comparison is made.

The rest of this page remains accurate but lacks the perception of the first paragraph.

The second paragraph on the second page, although not quite accurate about the reverb or EQ, does describe that the Eurythmics snare drum is thinner so is a valid comparison. Candidates can still achieve Level 4 with some inaccuracies if there is enough accurate material to counterbalance.

We don't know for sure which microphones were used however in the third paragraph, the candidate makes a reasonable distinction between how the different vocal styles have been captured. The writing is detailed in that it is applied to specific tracks within the recording and offers a comparison.

The final paragraph on the second page makes comparisons, drawing out features of the styles of the songs present in the recordings.

On the final page, the first paragraph accurately describes the processing on an instrument in the recording and explains that it is a transition effect. The time reference helps clarify to the examiner exactly which production feature is being discussed.

The final paragraph is inaccurate, stating that Eurythmics is a digital recording using an audio interface – wrong era.

Overall, it's clear that this candidate has listened to both versions of the song closely. They have met the Level 4 description of 'detailed'. The response is detailed and discusses parameters applied to specific instruments at specific moments in the song. There is a wide scope that covers the production aspects (bulleted on page 4 of this document).

There are a few inaccuracies, and the first page (after the first paragraph) is a little general but that is significantly outweighed by enough detailed material to be Level 4. It's not in the top half of Level 4, so it scores 14 marks.

5 Eurythmics: *Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)* (1983)

Marilyn Manson: *Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)* (1995)

Compare the production techniques used in each version of the song.

(16)

14

- The synths in the opening of ~~Tourbroots~~ 'Eurythmics' are most likely made of sawtooth oscillators and square ~~but also~~ ~~and then syn~~ meanwhile Manson uses an electric guitar that has some distortion on it to replace synths. This show that while ~~the~~ Eurythmics go for a disco feel, Manson use guitar to show rock genre cover.
- In Manson's version the vocals are male vocals which are double tracked and sung in a more harsh timbre, with short reverb all adding to the rock genre they go for. Meanwhile, Eurythmic have a female voice sung with backing vocals equal in the mix displaying this disco / pop feel.
- The Manson version ~~use~~ show a rock music style by using distorted electric guitars panned both left and right creating ~~dimen~~ harsh feeling. while eurythmics use lead synths instead ~~with~~ to keep pop feeling but also pan them left and right like Manson version, showing similarities in production.

10

P 7 9 8 7 0 A 0 1 0 1 2

- The drums used by Eurythmics are most likely created by a drum machine recorded by DI, commonly used by artists in the 80's as it has an electronic feel to the snare and hi-hat. The ~~snare~~ Meanwhile, the Maroon version uses a full drum kit recorded ~~each~~ each part of drum kit with a mic each, allowing for rock genre feel, plus ~~tambourine~~ tambourine used with hi-hat.
- The snare on the Eurythmics version has got ~~a~~ short reverb of 5-100ms on it and seems to have a slight band pass filter as the snare doesn't seem to highlight HF. Meanwhile, the Maroon version also has a snare drum with reverb on it however it is more 300hz and has got a HPF on it as it is a very clean sound, less muddy without LF.
- The vocal on the Eurythmics version may well have been recorded with a condenser mic with pop shield and shock mount to stop vibration and plosive from ruining quality of recording, ~~Meanwhile~~ this is normal of 80's recording. Meanwhile, the Maroon version may have used a dynamic mic on the vocals due to the loud screaming and singing that he does, dynamics deal better with loud noises than condenser mic.
- The musical style of the singing of both add to the genre they aim to add to. The Maroon version has screaming and shrill voice at times during the recording, adding to the rock/metal feel. Meanwhile, the Eurythmics have a clean and regular recording for a disco feel. ~~Both~~
Both recordings of the vocal have had compression on them

especially the Mavs version due to the shouting into the mic, the ~~The Eurythmics use a reg~~ Eurythmics, on the other hand use the compression to keep clean mix of song for pop, dance feel.

- The Eurythmics make use of a clever effect by reversing a piano chord at '0:27', as they go into the first verse. This reverse chord slightly sounds like a synth sound and so adds to the disco style. Meanwhile, Mavs use a different effect right at the start of the song and right at the end of the song. They have manipulated voices to make them sound like they are underwater.
- The backing vocal of the Eurythmics version have been panned alternating right and left in the lead up to synth solo, while the lead vocal is panned centrally. This variation is a modern technique and shows 80's recording. Meanwhile, the lead vocals of the Mavs version are double tracked by each track is panned slightly left and right, filling out the stereo and so create wider feel especially when ~~shouting~~. chanting.
- Lastly, it is obvious that the Eurythmics has been recorded digitally although in the 80's due to the synths sound being DI'd straight into the audio interface and the use of fade out very cleanly adding allure for disco style. Meanwhile, the Mavs version is also digitally recorded with ~~[illegible]~~ it being produced in the 90's where digital recording very common.

(Total for Question 5 = 16 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 16 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 60 MARKS